

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SAN JO 00755 261917Z

62

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 IO-14 JUSE-00

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SNM-02 SY-10 TRSE-00 USIA-15 NSC-10

SCI-06 OMB-01 AID-20 DRC-01 /111 W

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R 261803Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6329

INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN JOSE 0755

MEXICO FOR DEA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, CS

SUBJECT: NARCOTICS SITUATION IN COSTA RICA

REF: SAN JOSE 4253

1. EMBASSY WILL POUCH FEBRUARY 27 LATEST CT ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL NARCOTICS CONTROL SITUATION (SAN JOSE A-27). THIS ASSESSMENT UPDATES AND LARGELY RECONFIRMS THAT CONTAINED IN STRATEGY PAPER TRANSMITTED WITH OUR A-241 OF DECEMBER 22, 1972. IN ESSENCE, WE STILL FIND NO DOCUMENTED USE OF HEROIN OR OPIUM HERE, NO SEIZURES OF HARD DRUGS OTHER THAN CANESSA COCAINE CASE IN SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1972 WHICH HAD VERY SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS, AND NO OTHER FIRM EVIDENCE OF INTERNATIONAL TRAFFICKING IN HARD DRUGS.

2. EMBASSY HAS SEEN COPY OF SITUATION REPORT BY DEA SUPERVISORY AGENT VAN MATRE DATED JANUARY 11, 1974. WE FIND NOTHING NEW IN THE REPORT OF SUFFICIENT SUBSTANCE TO SUPPORT ITS CATEGORICAL CONCLUSION THAT COSTA RICA IS BEING USED AS A TRANSSHIPMENT POINT FOR NARCOTICS AND ITS RECOMMENDATION THAT A PERMNMNT DEA OFFICE BE ESTABLISHED HERE TO INTERDICT NARCOTICS SHIPMENTS TO THE U.S.

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PAGE 02 SAN JO 00755 261917Z

LISHED HERE TO INTERDICT NARCOTICS SHIPMENTS TO THE U.S

THE EVIDENCE IN THE REPORT IS ALMOST ENTIRELY CIRCUMSTANTIAL, MANY OF THE LEADS ARE QUITE OLD, AND THE (VERY ACCURATE) COMMENTS ABOUT THE WEAKNESSES OF LOCAL ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES COULD PROBABLY BE MADE ABOUT MOST COUNTRIES IN LATIN AMERICA.

3. AT THE SAME TIME, THE CT IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE PROSPECTIVE VULNERABILITY OF COSTA RICA TO INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF GETTING THE FACTS ABOUT WHAT IS OR IS NOT GOING ON IN THIS FIELD.

4. OUR ACTION PLAN OF APRIL 13, 1973 RECOMMENDED A NUMBER OF COURSE OF ACTION TO HELP STRENGTHEN COSTA RICAN INTELLIGENCE AND ENFORCEMENT CAPABILITIES. THAT PLAN WAS NOT APPROVED BECAUSE OF LACK OF EVIDENCE THAT THERE WAS A SUFFICIENT PROBLEM HERE (STATE 137298). WE STILL DO NOT HAVE THAT EVIDENCE. IN THE MEANTIME LOCAL NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT CAPABILITIES HAVE FURTHER DETERIORATED, AND WE ARE WAITING TO SEE WHETHER THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WHICH WILL TAKE OFFICE ON MAY 8 WILL MOVE EFFECTIVELY TO INVIGORATE THEM--AS IT HAS INDICATED TO THE EMBASSY IT PLANS TO DO.

5. IN VIEW OF ABOVE SITUATION, I RECOMMEND:

A) SIX MONTHS TDY BY DEA AGENT TO HELP US GET THE FACTS AND TO SHOW WHAT HE CAN DO, AFTER WHICH THE CONCRETE RESULTS WILL HAVE PRESUMABLY DEMONSTRATED WHETHER A PERMANENT DEA OFFICE IN SAN JOSE IS OR IS NOT WARRANTED. I WOULD WELCOME VAN MATRE FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT.

B) DEFERRAL OF SUBMISSION BY CT OF NEW ACTION PLAN UNTIL WE HAVE ADVANTAGE OF DEA TDY AND ALSO HAVE CLEARER EVIDENCE OF NEW GOCR INTENTIONS IN THIS AREA. I HOPE, HOWEVER, THAT INTER-AGENCY NARCOTICS CONTROL COMMITTEE WILL BE RECEPTIVE--EVEN IN ABSENCE OF APPROVED PLAN--TO SUCH SPOT REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE AS WE MAY CONSIDER WARRANTED IN FIRST MONTHS OF NEW ADMINISTRATION OR EVEN BEFORE. I AM THINKING PARTICULARLY OF POSSIBLE SHORT ORIENTATION OR TRAINING TRIPS TO US BY ONE OR TWO OF THE TOP NEW NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS WHEN CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 SAN JO 00755 261917Z

THEY HAVE BEEN CHOSEN. THIS COULD BE REAL TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY WHICH WOULD PAY LARGE DIVIDENDS LATER. LANE

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Reference:** SAN JOSE 4253  
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**Review Authority:** golinofr  
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**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 11 SEP 2002  
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**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
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**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** NARCOTICS SITUATION IN COSTA RICA  
**TAGS:** SNAR, CS  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005